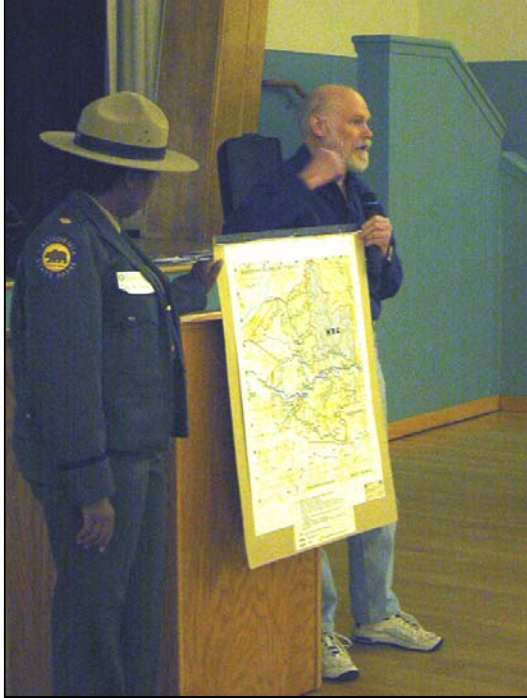


## **Public Planning Workshop for Willow Creek property Sonoma Coast State Beach General Plan**



### **Workshop Gathers Public Input**

February 15, 2006

Sebastopol Veterans Memorial Building

Approximately 110 people attended the General Plan Workshop for the recently acquired Upper Willow Creek Addition. Thanks to all who attended and shared their ideas about the future for this new important addition to Sonoma Coast State Beach. The meeting was held at the Sebastopol Veteran's Memorial Building on the evening of February 15, 2006 and provided an opportunity for the public to give input on the Willow Creek area of the park. All of the ideas and concerns will be considered in developing General Plan concepts and guidelines for the future public use and management of this exciting new area of the park.

The following summary highlights some of the ideas and comments presented by meeting participants:

- Support preservation of watershed and public's enjoyment of Willow Creek
- Support restoration implementation recommended in the Willow Creek Watershed Plan
- Support for reclassification to protect park resources
- Some park areas that have very sensitive resources or need restoration should be off-limits to everyone.
- Complete a Trails Plan that provides for regional trail connectivity, multiple-use trails, dedicated single-use trails, and adequate trailhead facilities
- Some trails should be hikers only.
- Complete park unit Trails Plan before decommissioning any more roads. Some roads that were currently serving as the area's interim trail system have been decommissioned (eliminated) reducing current trail access and use.
- Land failures have occurred at some locations where decommissioned roads cross streams.... perhaps an unfortunate/uncharacteristic result of a 25-year storm occurrence and the timing of road decommissioning work.

- Oppose establishing public access to Upper Willow Creek area from Upper Willow Creek Road or Coleman Valley Road because of impacts on local residents, roads, and public safety.
- Increasing park use of Willow Creek watershed and traffic on local roads has been causing safety, privacy, fire hazard, noise, parking, partying/drinking activities, gunfire, and illegal activity problems/impacts for local residents (Willow Creek Road & Coleman Valley Road).
- Local roads cannot handle increasing park generated traffic
- There has been no increase in law enforcement presence/patrols, park infrastructure, park staffing, or local road improvements for the Willow Creek area.
- Conversation with sheriff indicates area problems have declined since DPR ownership, vandalism and shooting has been happening for years...no different now.
- Establishing mountain bike trail opportunities is needed to meet high recreation demand and limited opportunities in Sonoma County. Encourage establishing shared trails, long trail loops, and regional connectivity including Red Hill and the coast. Cycling volunteers want to be partners with DPR and are available to help with trail planning, development, and maintenance.
- Backcountry equestrians want to continue and improve riding opportunities in the watershed. Consider establishing road and single-track trail opportunities similar to Annadel SP. Request equestrian parking and access at Freezeout Flat and Pomo Camp. Offer to volunteer services to help with park and trail projects. Volunteer resource: 30 clubs, 18,000 horses.
- Support grazing to reduce fire hazard....elk could be used as an alternative to cattle.
- Neighboring rancher: agriculture and park use can coexist together
- Should add all open space lands along the coast to the park (from Estero to Salt Point)
- Need to relocate park maintenance facility out of Lower Willow Creek area.
- Increasing park use of Willow Creek watershed and traffic on local roads has been causing safety, privacy, fire hazard, noise, and parking, partying & drinking activities, gunfire, and illegal activity problems & impacts for local residents (Willow Creek Road & Coleman Valley Road).
- LandPaths board members attending the Workshop are listening to public input and concerns. Appreciate partnership with DPR and the County.



## **What's Next in the Planning Process?**

Once public input has been received and alternatives are considered, the Preliminary General Plan and Draft EIR will be revised to include the Willow Creek addition and made available for additional public review. Following this public review and comment period, the Preliminary Plan/EIR will then be submitted to the State Parks and Recreation Commission for approval (Spring 2007).

The planning team is currently identifying resource sensitivities and evaluating the potential access locations into the Willow Creek property. Concept plans, with goals for long-range management and use will be presented for public review and feedback at the next public planning workshop.

### **PLANNING SCHEDULE**

#### **Public Workshop #4 (February 15, 2006)**

Identify issues and concerns - scoping meeting for Willow Creek

#### **SPRING 2006**

Prepare concept plans and long-range goals

Update Preliminary General Plan and prepare Draft EIR

#### **SUMMER 2006**

Public Workshop #5 – Review alternative concepts & management goals

Complete Preliminary General Plan/Draft EIR

#### **FALL 2006**

Public review of the Updated Preliminary General Plan and Draft EIR

#### **SPRING 2007**

State Park and Recreation Commission hearing

If you would like to be added to the mailing list to receive notification of future workshops and planning updates, please contact Rick Royer at the Russian River Sector Office at [royer@mcn.org](mailto:royer@mcn.org) or phone 707-869-2356.

Thank you for your interest and participation in the Sonoma Coast State Beach General Plan.

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